

IFAD policy to preventing and responding to sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse

A Guide for Borrowers/Recipients of IFAD funding



Investing in rural people



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Purpose

This scope of this guide is to provide support to Borrowers and Recipients of IFAD funding in understanding the requirements of the IFAD policy to preventing and responding to sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse. This guide is intended for all staff of implementing partners.



IFAD works to empower poor rural people to transform rural economies and promote prosperity, food security and resilience. This important mandate, rooted in the principles of integrity, professionalism, focus on results and respect for the dignity of all people, comes with an equally important commitment to the highest ethical standards. It is with this in mind that IFAD has adopted a zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse in its activities and operations.



IFAD'S CORE VALUES

Respect

Value others' diversity, be fair and inclusive.

Focus on results

Strive for excellence to achieve project goals.

Professionalism

Apply your skills and knowledge, innovate, persevere.

Integrity

Be honest, committed and transparent.

Sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse are grave breaches of trust of the people IFAD serves. It has devastating, long-lasting consequences for victims, their families and their communities. Ultimately, it can also harm IFAD's reputation and that of all actors involved in rural development.

In this short guide, we will review the policies, mechanisms and obligations that directly affect the way staff, consultants and partners

of IFAD-funded operations and activities and how they must act to prevent and report on allegations of sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse.

IFAD seeks to ensure a safe working environment that is free of harassment, including sexual harassment, and sexual exploitation and abuse in its activities and operations. These principles are stipulated in IFAD policy to preventing and responding to sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse, which applies to all IFAD-financed operations and activities.

IFAD does not tolerate any acts of sexual harassment or sexual exploitation and abuse in the activities it supports, and requires timely and appropriate action from Borrowers and Recipients of IFAD funding, satisfactory to the Fund, to address allegations. All Borrowers and Recipients must ensure their full compliance with this policy in all IFAD-financed operations.



KEY DEFINITIONS

Sexual harassment is...

"...any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favour or other verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that unreasonably interferes with work, alters or is made a condition of employment, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment."

Sexual exploitation is...

"...profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of others."

Sexual abuse is...

"...the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions."

[IFAD policy to preventing and responding to sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse](#) defines obligations of all staff and individuals on contract with IFAD and sets out approaches to prevent and respond to sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse.



← IFAD policy to preventing and responding to sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse



Organizations of the United Nations, including IFAD, prohibit behaviours such as:

- Sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18 years. There are no exceptions.
- Sex in exchange for money, employment, preferential treatment, goods or services, sexually humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour.
- Soliciting or seeking out prostitution.
- Sex with a consenting adult when the relationship is marked by inherently unequal power dynamics.



← No Excuse

Obligations - Borrowers and Recipients of IFAD financing

The IFAD policy to preventing and responding to sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse has been fully integrated into the [General Conditions for Agricultural Development Financing](#).



← IFAD General
Conditions for
Agricultural Development
Financing



IFAD/Petterik Wiggers

In practice, this means that projects must be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the IFAD policy. The policy may be amended from time to time.

Among obligations for Borrowers and Recipient of IFAD funding, most important are:

- 1. Promptly inform** IFAD of the existence of an allegation received or suspected case.
- 2. Take timely** and appropriate action
- 3. Inform IFAD** of the outcome of actions taken with respect of an allegation of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse received in connection with an IFAD funded operations or activity.

Failure to take these steps may result in the suspension, in part or in whole, the right of the borrower/recipient to request withdrawals from the loan or grant account.



Ethical procurement

IFAD policy on sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse extends to contractors and vendors of IFAD-funded projects and programmes. Projects are required to conduct background checks of prospective consultants and include a self-declaration form in the contract for disclosure of sexual offences. More details can be found in the [Project Procurement Guidelines](#) and its accompanying [Project Procurement Handbook](#).



← IFAD
Project
Procurement
Guidelines



← IFAD
Project Procurement
Handbook



Victim-centered approach

IFAD promotes a victim-centered approach in relation to prevention, mitigation and response to sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse. Paramount to this approach is the protection of survivors, the importance of confidentiality in treating allegations and the respect of survivors' wishes and needs.

Partners implementing IFAD-funded projects are expected to take a proactive approach to identify local health centres, clinics and legal services where victims of sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse can find the support they need. Sexual exploitation and abuse risk assessment is mainstreamed into IFAD operations, from design to implementation to supervision.

Dedicated risk indicators are monitored throughout the project cycle and reported on during the supervision process, in particular in [IFAD's Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures \(SECAP\)](#).



← IFAD's Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures (SECAP)



NO TOLERANCE

IFAD has no tolerance for acts of sexual harassment or sexual exploitation and abuse. Its commitment includes:

- *Facilitating the reporting of sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse and ensuring a prompt and effective response to allegations, including through timely and objective investigations.*
- *Protecting reporting parties who act in good faith from retaliation.*
- *Preventing sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse from occurring in the first place, through activities such as awareness raising, background checks and appropriate project design.*

Take action!

IFAD has designated staff to act as sexual exploitation and abuse focal points in each region to promote IFAD no-tolerance policy and to raise awareness with project partners and implementing personnel. These staff members also act as contact points for reporting sexual exploitation and abuse cases in all confidentiality. The sexual exploitation and abuse focal points work closely with IFAD's Ethics Office.

Combating sexual harassment, sexual abuse and exploitation is a shared responsibility. We all have a role to play to ensure a safe working environment and to protect the communities that we serve from sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse.

If you have any questions or need advice, or want to find out who your sexual exploitation and abuse focal point is, please reach out to the Ethics office. Together, we can fight the scourge of sexual misconduct.



Contact Us

Ethics Office

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December 2020

